Amendments to the Specification:

Please add the following two (2) new paragraphs following the last paragraph on page 4 starting with: "Although the punches were originally designed and are still.....": All of the new styles of paper punches are hand-held and hand operated. This is a particular advantage of the lever-actuated punch, which is specifically designed to be held and operated in one hand while the sheet of material is held and aligned with the punch in the other hand. All of these hand-held punches incorporate a housing that covers the frame and the cutting die while leaving the slot for the sheet of material. This is done to both protect the operator and to improve the appearance of the punch since that hand-held punch is clearly a consumer item. The housing often has the vendors name attached or incorporated into that housing along with a representation of the pattern of that particular hand-held punch.

It is important to note that the pattern of the hand-held punch is a closed geometry. It may be a simple geometry such as a circle or square or it may be a complex pattern such as a butterfly. The closed geometry means that the punch, in ordinary use without the invention, punches out a completed pattern in the sheet of material leaving a single hole in that sheet of material in the shape of the pattern of that hand-held punch and a piece of the material also in the shape of the punch pattern. This closed geometry also means that the punch is used away from the edge of the sheet of material so that the whole pattern of that punch can be cut into that sheet of material.

Please add the following under the section: "Brief description of the drawings" and after the sentence starting: "FIG 3....."
Figure 4 shows the internal details common to all hand-held punches during a punching operation.
Please delete the paragraph beginning with: " As illustrated in FIG 1, the bottom portion 580 .....:" and replace that paragraph with
As further shown in FIG 1, the hand-held punch has a bottom portion 580. This bottom portion 580 contains the hole that closely matches the pattern of the cutting die 595 of

FIG 4. As is well known in the industry, the actual spacing between the side of the cutting die 595 and the matching hole 590 of FIG 4 must be less than the thickness of the thinnest sheet of material being punched to achieve a sharp and repeatable cut. A problem occurs after a partial punch is achieved using the invention as described above to make a partial cut. The cut portion of the sheet of material 585 of FIG 4 will be pushed down into the hole 590 of FIG 4 making it difficult to remove that sheet of material 585. One option as shown by element 570 of FIG 1 would be a locking hinge that would maintain the slot 581 in a fixed size during the punching operation and then could be released following that punching operation to allow removal of the sheet of material 585. As another option the element 570 could represent a snap apart section of the punch 500 where the bottom portion 580 of the punch is removed after the punching operation to allow easy removal of the sheet of material 585. The preferred embodiment would be no hinge or snap apart mechanism since that is the most economical approach. In this embodiment, the operator uses a suitable tool to carefully push back any cut material away from the hole 590 so that the sheet of material 585 can be removed

Please delete the following paragraph beginning with: While the figures have shown threaded elements to form ...."

Please add the following new paragraph immediately after the paragraph beginning: "FIG 3 shows a separate adapter for the lever-actuated punch....."
FIG 4 shows the details of a punching operation where a sheet of material 585 has been inserted into the slot 581 of a punch and the cutting die 595 pushed down. The curved edge 598 of the cutting die 595 is piercing the sheet of material 585 and will continue downward through the matching hole 590 in the lower portion 580 of the punch. A portion of the housing 550, which covers the cutting die 595 and most of the rest of the punch, is also shown in this figure.

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Amendment to the claims:

This listing of the claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

Listing of claims

What is claimed is:

1. (currently amended~~) A)~~ A hand-~~machine~~held machine for piercing sheets of material comprising:

an adjustable apparatus that can be moved by hand;

the adjustable apparatus acts as a stop to a moveable cutting die containing a punch pattern thereby varying an amount of the punch pattern cut into a sheet of material being punched;

the moveable cutting die is designed with a cutting surface so that said adjustable apparatus can limit the amount of said sheet of said material cut by said cutting surface;

the adjustable apparatus can be moved to a position so that said designed pattern of said punch is fully cut out of said sheet of said material by the movement of said moveable cutting die;

a frame which holds said adjustable apparatus and said moveable cutting die with said moveable cutting die held in the top of said frame and a hole corresponding to said moveable cutting die in a base of said frame wherein said frame aligns said moveable cutting die to said ~~hold~~ hole allowing for said moveable cutting die to be moved through said hole;

a ~~fixed size~~ slot in said frame with said slot extending partially through said frame to accept and restrain said sheet of said material prior to said sheet of said material being punched,~~;~~ whereby said slot is fixed in size during a punch operation;

a means to activate said moveable cutting die moving said cutting die to where it contacts said sheet of said material in said slot cutting said sheet of said material;

and a spring installed within said frame to return said moveable cutting die to a starting position allowing easy removal of said sheet of said material.

2. (currently amended) A hand-held machine for piercing sheets of material ~~a~~ as claimed in claim 1 wherein said cutting surface of said moveable cutting die is formed in a curved shape where said curved shape is perpendicular to the plane of a top surface of said sheet of material.

Claims 3, 4 (Canceled)

~~5.~~ (5. (currently amended) A hand-held machine for piercing sheets of material as claimed in claim 1 wherein said adjustable apparatus is an externally threaded piece of hardware that is located in a matching threaded insert attached to said frame such that said externally threaded piece of hardware can be rotated within said threaded insert moving said threaded piece of hardware up and down thereby adjusting and controlling the amount of travel of said moveable cutting die and acting as said stop.

Claims 6-8 (Canceled)

9 .(currently amended) A hand-held machine for piercing sheets of material as claimed in claim 1 wherein said means to activate said moveable cutting die is a thumb controlled lever in sliding contact with said moveable cutting die thereby creating the necessary motion when said lever is pushed by said thumb.

Claim 10 (Canceled)

11. (currently amended) A hand-held machine for piercing sheets of material as claimed in claim 1 further comprising a housing to enclose said frame and to permanently enclose a portion of said means of activating said moveable cutting die.

12. (currently amended) A hand-held machine for piercing sheets of material as claimed in claim 1 wherein a portion of said adjustable apparatus is fabricated as an integral part of said housing.

13. 13 (withdrawn-currently amended) A machine for piercing sheets of material as claimed in claim 1-further comprising a locking hinge mechanism located at said base of said machine where said locking hinge mechanism allows said base to be moved away from the rest of said machine following said material piercing thereby allowing for easy release of said material and said locking hinge mechanism then allows said base to be returned to the original starting position.

~~)Claims)~~ Claims 14, 15 (canceled)

16.(currently amended) A hand-held machine for piercing sheets of material comprising:

an adjustable apparatus that can be moved by hand;

the adjustable apparatus acts as a stop to a moveable cutting die containing a punch pattern thereby varying an amount of the punch pattern cut into a sheet of material being punched;

the moveable cutting die is designed with a cutting surface so that said adjustable apparatus can limit the amount of said sheet of said material cut by said cutting surface;

the adjustable apparatus can be moved to a position so that said designed pattern of a punch is cut fully out of said sheet of said material by the movement of said moveable cutting die;

a frame which holds said adjustable apparatus and said moveable punch cutting die with said moveable cutting die held in the top of said frame and a hole corresponding to said moveable cutting die in a base of said frame wherein said frame aligns said moveable cutting die to said hole allowing for said moveable cutting die to be moved through said hole;

a ~~fixed size~~ slot in said frame with said slot extending partially through said frame to accept and restrain said sheet of said material prior to said sheet of said material being punched~~;~~, whereby said slot is fixed in size during a punch operation;

and a means to activate said moveable cutting die moving said cutting die to where it contacts said sheet of said material in said slot cutting said sheet of said material.

17. (currently amended) A hand-held machine for piercing sheets of material as claimed in claim 16 wherein said cutting surface of said moveable cutting ~~die is~~die is formed in a curved shape where said curved shape is perpendicular to the plane of a top surface of said sheet of material.

Claims 18, 19 (Canceled)

20.(currently amended) A hand-held machine for piercing sheets of material as claimed in claim 16 wherein said adjustable apparatus is an externally threaded piece of hardware that is located in a matching threaded insert attached to said frame such that said externally threaded piece of hardware can be rotated within said threaded insert moving said threaded piece of hardware up and down thereby adjusting and controlling the amount of travel of said moveable cutting die and acting as said stop.

Claims 21 and 22 (Canceled)

23.(currently ~~amended)~~ ~~A~~ hand-held machine for piercing sheets of material as claimed in claim 16 wherein said means to activate said moveable cutting die is a thumb controlled lever in sliding contact with said moveable cutting die thereby creating the necessary motion when said lever is pushed by said thumb.

Claim 24 (Canceled)

25.(currently amended) A hand-held machine for piercing sheets of material as claimed in claim 16 further comprising a housing to enclose said frame and to permanently enclose a portion of said means of activating said moveable cutting die.

26.(currently amended) A hand-held machine for piercing sheets of material as claimed in claim 16 wherein a portion of said adjustable apparatus is fabricated as an integral part of said housing..

27(currently amended). A hand-held machine for piercing sheets of material as claimed in claim 16 further comprising a locking hinge mechanism located at the base of said machine where said locking hinge mechanism allows said base to be moved away from the rest of said machine following said material piercing thereby allowing for easy release of said material and said locking hinge mechanism then allows said base to be returned to the original starting position.

Claims ,-28-29 (Canceled)

30.(currently amended) An adjustable separate apparatus that can be added to existing ~~decorative~~ hand-held sheet punches comprising:

said separate adjustable apparatus acts as a stop to a moveable cutting die containing a punch pattern thereby limiting the amount of said ~~a~~ punch pattern cut into a sheet of material being punched;

said moveable cutting die is designed with a curved cutting surface so that said adjustable apparatus can limit the amount of paper cut by said ~~that~~ curved surface;

said separate adjustable apparatus can be moved to a position so that said designed pattern of said punch is cut fully out of said sheet of material, ~~paper~~;

and said separate adjustable apparatus is ~~can be~~ permanently installed on ~~the~~ a housing of existing hand-held ~~decorative~~ sheet punches

32 32. (withdrawn-currently amended) ~~An~~ A separate adjustable apparatus ~~adapter~~ as claimed in claim 31 that is attached to a ~~-~~housing of said hand-held sheet punch ~~machine~~ by using a technique that makes said ~~-capable~~ apparatus capable of being removed and reattached to said hand-held sheet punch.